



The terms and criteria for eligibility of a book for the Caldecott Medal, awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

## **Terms and Criteria**

### **Randolph Caldecott Medal**

#### **TERMS**

1. The Medal shall be awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published in English in the United States during the preceding year. There are no limitations as to the character of the picture book except that the illustrations be original work. Honor Books may be named. These shall be books that are also truly distinguished.
2. The Award is restricted to artists who are citizens or residents of the United States.
3. The committee in its deliberations is to consider only the books eligible for the award, as specified in the terms.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

1. A "picture book for children" as distinguished from other books with illustrations, is one that essentially provides the child with a visual experience. A picture book has a collective unity of story-line, theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised.
2. A "picture book for children" is one for which children are a potential audience. The book displays respect for children's understandings, abilities, and appreciations. Children are defined as persons of ages up to and including fourteen and picture books for this entire age range are to be considered.
3. "Distinguished" is defined as
  - marked by eminence and distinction: noted for significant achievement
  - marked by excellence in quality
  - marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence
  - individually distinct
4. The artist is the illustrator or co-illustrators. The artist may be awarded the medal posthumously.
5. "Original Work" means that illustrations reprinted or compiled from other sources are not eligible.

6. "American picture book in the United States" specifies that books originally published in other countries are not eligible.

7. "Published . . . in the preceding year" means that the book has a publication date in that year, was available for purchase in that year, and has a copyright date no later than that year. A book might have a copyright date prior to the year under consideration but, for various reasons, was not published until the year under consideration. If a book is published prior to its year of copyright as stated in the book, it shall be considered in its year of copyright as stated in the book. The intent of the definition is that every book be eligible for consideration, but that no book be considered in more than one year.

8. "Resident" specifies that author has established and maintained residence in the United States as distinct from being a casual or occasional visitor.

9. The term, "only the books eligible for the Award," specifies that the committee is not to consider the entire body of the work by an artist or whether the artist has previously won the award. The committee's decision is to be made following deliberation about books of the specified calendar year.

10. "In English" means that the committee considers only books published in English. This requirement DOES NOT limit the use of words or phrases in another language where appropriate in context.

## CRITERIA

1. In identifying a distinguished picture in a book for children,

a. Committee members need to consider:

- Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed;
- Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept; of appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or concept; of delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting mood or information through the pictures.

b. Committee members must consider excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience.

2. The only limitation to graphic form is that the form must be one which may be used in a picture book. The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media (i.e., sound or film equipment) for its enjoyment.

3. Each book is to be considered as a picture book. The committee is to make its decision primarily on the illustration, but other components of a book are to be considered especially when they make a book less effective as a children's picture book. Such other components might include the written text, the overall design of the book, etc.

Note: The committee should keep in mind that the award is for distinguished illustrations in a picture book and for excellence of pictorial presentation for children. The award is not for didactic intent or for popularity.

Adopted by the ALSC Board, January 1978. Revised, Midwinter 1987.